

BOTANY.

MANITOBA'S WILD FLOWERS.

There are few countries which can vie with Manitoba in the number of beautiful flowering plants which from early Spring to late Autumn make her glorious prairies one blaze of magnificent colour.

At the *Conversazione* held in the Normal School, Ottawa, on Monday evening, February 6th, was exhibited a beautiful collection of 100 water colour drawings of Manitoban plants, all collected and painted by Mr. Norman Criddle, at Aweme, Manitoba. This collection was very much admired by everyone. The drawings were particularly characterised by their botanical accuracy and the artistic taste with which each species was delineated. The facies of each plant was well shown and the colouring of the flowers was admirable.

Aweme is situated about twenty miles south-east of Brandon, thirteen miles south of Sewell, and six miles north of Treesbank, among the sand hills, and in the vicinity of a large swamp. Among the paintings were several rare plants, and many others were of interest for their beauty or for their occurrence at the locality where they were found. Perhaps the most admired of all these paintings was a white-flowered form of the truly magnificent Drummond's Thistle (*Cnicus Drummondii*), a giant species calculated to charm the heart of every Scotchman with its enormous flowers between three and four inches across. There are two forms of this Thistle, one with many heads arranged up a stout stem over two feet high, and an entirely acaulescent form with one large flower lying close to the ground, in the centre of a mat-like rosette of acanthus-like leaves, every prickle of which is tipped with purple.

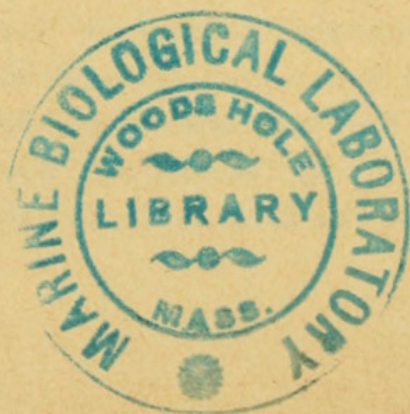
The very rare yellow-flowered variety *lutescens* of *Aster ptarmicoides* was well represented. I have had this variety growing vigorously for four years; the root was collected at Virden, Man., and since the first year after transplanting has borne each year three or four strong stems, the flowers retaining their yellow tinge as well in the East as on its native prairies. A specimen of

this rare plant was also collected at Griswold, Man., some years ago. Mr. Criddle's painting represents the variety admirably.

Another rare plant of interest to botanists, of which the drawing was much noticed, was *Townshendia sericea*. *Boltonia asteroides*, which has been seldom collected in Canada, was found by Mr. Criddle at Aweme.

Some of the interesting varietal forms represented in this collection were albinos of *Liatris punctata*, *Monarda fistulosa*, var. *mollis*, *Silene antirrhina*, and *Anemone patens*, var. *Nuttalliana*. There was also a yellow-fruited form of wild raspberry (*Rubus strigosus*) and a pale-yellow-flowered form of *Lilium Philadelphicum*. *Polygala paucifolia* was of interest as the first record of this pretty flower in Manitoba. *Corallohiza striata*, a widely distributed but always rare plant, attracted much notice on account of its rarity in the Ottawa district. *Oxytropis Lambertii* was shown with both colour varieties, the ordinary yellowish white and the rose purple. This plant is the "Loco weed" of the South-western States, but no ill effects to horses on our plains have ever been recorded. A variety of *Lepachys columnaris* with the golden-yellow flowers blotched with seal-brown, which is not very uncommon on the plains, would be a valuable acquisition in the flower garden.

These paintings of Mr. Criddle's are only a part of his collection, as he has previously sent down two equally large packets similar to the present one, every plant in which was drawn with the same accuracy and taste as those above referred to. Mr. Criddle is also making a collection of drawings of the insects of Manitoba, from which some new records for the Province have been made. It is just such careful individual work as Mr. Criddle is doing which is of most value to specialists when working up the scientific geographical distribution of plants and animals.—
J. FLETCHER.





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